

# THE PERSONAL ARCHIVE ZINE

**BLACK  
IMAGE  
CENTER**

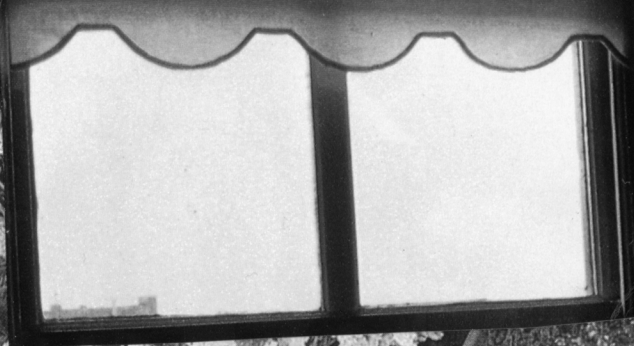
**FOR  
THE BLACK FAMILY ARCHIVE**

**2024**

**BY T.A.P.E. LOS ANGELES**



Anna Maria Malino, In-Out (Antropofagia) [In-Out  
black and white analog photograph, original photo



## LINKS & RESOURCES

[www.tapeanalog.org](http://www.tapeanalog.org)

Visit T.A.P.E.'s website to learn more about what we offer for analog media support. Please reach out to us at [info@tapeanalog.org](mailto:info@tapeanalog.org) for low-cost and free digitizing of tape-based media.

[www.blackimagecenter.org](http://www.blackimagecenter.org)

Learn more about Black Image Center's mission to connect Black image makers and storytellers to photography resources and beyond. Keep up to date on their events!

[www.lapl.org/labs](http://www.lapl.org/labs)

Visit the Los Angeles Public Library site to learn more about free resources in their Octavia Lab that include DIY digitizing stations.

[www.permanent.org](http://www.permanent.org)

A digital preservation platform for storing and sharing. Not a free service, but good to be aware of if helpful for your needs. Not affiliated with T.A.P.E.





# ARCHIVE AS ALTAR

Think of your archive as an altar to yourself and your loves in life, whether that be friends, family, activities, place etc.

An altar isn't built in one day, nor is it a one and done endeavor. This will be a living, breathing project, one that is constantly checked on and added to, and even reassessed.

Staying organized will help others and yourself access and interact with your archive. Naming your file system, arranging your history and taking care of both your digital and analog elements is like adding flowers and offerings to an altar. It is a profound act of care.

*Metal stem support*

NOW THE FUN  
BEGINS!



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### T.A.P.E. COLLECTIVE LOS ANGELES

TAPE is a Los Angeles-based 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to facilitating support for analog media through free digitizing, education, hands-on-training, equipment rentals & volunteer opportunities.

T.A.P.E. — Teach. Archive. Preserve. Exhibit.

### BLACK IMAGE CENTER

Black Image Center is a collective based non profit 501c3 founded by a group of young Black Photographers in Los Angeles. Black Image Center operates as a community art space that is committed to uplifting LA's Black storytellers through access to community, educational programming, and job opportunities.

### THE BLACK FAMILY ARCHIVE

Black Family Archive is a Black Image Center quarterly program that brings Black families across Los Angeles together in celebration of intergenerational bonds of love and kinship that build our communities.



## DIGITAL BEST PRACTICES

You will probably want to digitize some of the analog materials in your collection, or you probably already have A LOT of born-digital materials, like voice messages, camera pics, or videos you've been keeping. In a lot of ways, digital files are more precarious than analog media, so here are a few tips to help you manage and safekeep those digital files:

**LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe)** - This is a digital preservation strategy that is all in its name. It isn't just creating several copies of your digital files, but sharing these files on multiple devices or in multiple locations with trusted community members can be an affordable and fail-safe way of keeping your digital files in case of natural disaster, digital decay, or technological failure.

At least once a year, schedule a date to plug in hard drives and review files to ensure that they open well on your current computer.

Migrate files from hard drives and solid state drives to newer once every few years.

If you are using a cloud service to store your digital files, be sure to review any policy changes regarding privacy, use, and ownership of the files they store, and check for increased storage pricing at least on an annual basis. These services can be convenient but at the end of the day, most are run by large corporations that are ultimately financially driven and are less concerned with helping you preserve your own personal archive.

Refer to our Personal Digital Preservation zine for more guidance!





## Analog vs Digital Preservation

Is your collection of personal artifacts a mix of analog and digital? Identify what you have and if there is a better way to store them. Here are some categories for items that can be stored together in similar conditions:

### PAPERS + PHOTO PRINTS

Keep away from humidity, sunlight, and heat sources. Store in protected environments like photo boxes, plastic sleeves, three ring binders. Desiccant Packets like silica gel can help absorb air moisture that might otherwise damage paper in the long run.

### FILM + NEGATIVES

Keep away from humid, sunlight, and heat and hot environments. Don't use rubber bands and sticky tapes, metal paperclips for grouping. Store in well ventilated boxes.

### VIDEO + AUDIO TAPE

Keep away from humid and hot environments. Store cassettes in a plastic or paper container to keep safe from pollutants or bugs. Place upright like you would books on a shelf. Keep away from electronics with magnets inside of them like speakers or hard-disk drives.

### DISC + HARD DRIVE - CD, DVDs, DVD-Rs, CDRoms, Thumb/Jump Drive, Hard-Disk Drives

Keep away from humid environments. Stow away with silica gel packets if you can't entirely avoid humidity.

## Why are we writing this?

This zine is a kicking off point for TAPE to introduce the reader to the concepts of personal archiving. Why would one start this practice? Are we already practicing self archiving in ways that are valid and helpful for our future selves and others? These are questions we aim to get at the heart of and begin to answer.

The personal is political. It becomes more evident as time moves away from opportunities to engage with lived realities. Self archiving is an opportunity for agency over our own stories, the stories of those around us and how we want to communicate them.

Personal media preservation, the act of saving our photos, letters, videos--our representational media, is a crucial first step in having agency over our own lives. We add something to the larger record of our relatives, friends and fellow human beings on this Earth. This preservation aids in the kaleidoscopic archival view of our time on this world, not for humans millions of years from now but for our family 25 years down the line.

You never know when someone might need your archive for research, answers, or even just connection.



-D.R.O. & JESSICA G.Z.  
T.A.P.E. Board Members

One of the greatest misunderstandings around film is that only the content matters and needs preserving. But the content happens as a result of the medium; they cannot be separated.

## What is a personal archive?

A personal archive is...

...all the letters you sent to your friends in highschool.

...a bookcase full of records from your grandfather's old band.

... an organized photo album of your grandmother's swim club.

...CDRoms full of your childhood skate videos.

...undeveloped film rolls from your uncle you are curious about and get developed to save digitally.

**It's whatever you want it to be.**

## Where to start?

Allow your interest to guide the way. It's as much work as you want to do. You can start anywhere. Ask yourself - what is very important to you for saving?

Do you want to start in the present? You can begin by creating and organizing folders on your phone as a way to organize pictures.

You can gather all family photos you have access to and organize them in a box, or better yet, an archival acid-free box!

If you have audio-visual media in a hot room like a garage or storage unit in a hot city, store them in a sturdy box in a cool spot in your home instead.

Once you have material gathered, begin another level of organization by taking inventory. You can write these items down on a piece of paper or a digital spreadsheet, whatever works best for you.

*long ice core, taken at the ice cap's summit,*

Google offers free spreadsheets in their app suite called Sheets.

*Quelccaya offers a rare record of equatorial weather patterns, such as El Niño, which*

## Best practices you already have

As you are someone who is joining us today at the Black Family Archive, you are already in deep preservation practice. An event and gathering like this is a great place to begin shaping the ongoing project of your personal archiving.

If you are someone who asks family and friends questions about where certain photos, letters or pictures are when you see them, you are doing archival research. It's on your mind to gather these elements and that is half the work.

Is there a box of video tapes you've been meaning to digitally transfer so you can share with your family? If you have already gathered elements like that and placed them somewhere for safe keeping, you are in the middle of an archiving project.